The Philosophy of Despair

In a recently published essay Dr. David Starr Jordan writes suggestively if not convincingly of "The Philosophy of Despair." Taking for his text certain quatrains, of the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam, Dr. Jordan attempts to state what is the reply of science to pessimism. "In the presence of the infinite problem of life," writes Dr. Jordan, "the voice of science is dumb, for science is the co-ordinate and corrected expression of human experience and human experience must stop with the limitations of human life. . . . It is my purpose here to indicate some part of the answer of science to the philosophy of despair. Direct reply science has none. We can not argue against a singer or a poet. The poet sings of what he feels, but science speaks only of what we know. We feel infinity but we cannot know it, for to the highest human wisdom the ultimate truths of the universe are no nearer than to the child. Science knows no ultimate truths. These are beyond the reach of man, and all that man knows must be stated in terms of his experience. But as to human experience and conduct science has a word to say. Therefore, science can speak of the causes and results of pessimism. It can touch the practical side of the riddle of life by asking certain questions, the answers to which lie within the province of human experience."

Exactly so! Science may only "touch the practical side of the riddle of life by asking certain questions, the answers to which lie within the province of human experience." Of the spiritual side of the riddle of life science may not speak with authority. For answers to questions that touch vitally the conscience and the heart, one must needs pass beyond the circumscribed limitations of science—of knowledge—and enter the domain of faith and feeling. Some one has said—was it not Walter Savage Landor?—that all life— like all Gaul—is divided into three parts and that the mainspring of action in these separated divisions may be found in the sense of power, the sense of religion and the sense of love; that the domains of love and of religion are contiguous, but that far removed from each is the domain of power, and that he who would be happy in this life must needs recognize that one may not cultivate the sense of power without, in large measure, obliterating the sense of love and the sense of religion. It may, therefore, be said that the problem of life may be solved wisely only by recognizing and reckoning with these its three distinct features, and by patiently developing each in its normal scope. The cure for pessimism is to be found not in science, but rather in that moderation—that temperance in all things—which may be attained and may be obtained only by nicely balancing the three great passions of the human heart we have mentioned. The superintendent of a large insane asylum in Philadelphia, when asked from what his patients were suffering, replied succinctly: "Money, love, religion." He was merely concretely expressing the idea that Landor had already enforced. "The Philosophy of Despair" is seldom philosophy, and it is not always despair. In it there is little of that "charm" which Milton associates with "divine philosophy" and there is even less of that "despair' 'which ordinarily suggests misery. The philosophy of despair is, too often, an ill name for a not intolerable disease of the heart—a trick of speech by which human vanity seeks to outwit man's better self.—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

A Century of Subjugation.

Major-General Adna R. Chaffee, for some time past military commander in the Philippines, comes home to tell us that it will take 100 years to establish a "beneficent" government in the Philippines, and that our grandchildren's children will be lucky if they see it done in their day. In order to hold down the Christian Filipinos in Luzon, he says Manila must be garrisoned with an army, and as for the impossible Mohammedans of Mindanao and Sulu, they can be kept quiet only by large pensions, in the form of tribute from a weaker nation, to the tribal chiefs or sultans.

This opinion of the military commander seems to conflict at some important points with the rose-colored views of the high-salaried members of the so-called civil government. Instead of the general acceptance of American sovereignty by the Filipinos and ready yielding to the establishment of our systems, there is the prospect of a century resistance to subjugation on the part of the Christians. As for the Mohammedans, they will never submit; we must pay them tribute—"pensions," General Chaffee calls it—forever.

It probably is not so bad as this. The power of the United States is great enough to crush out the patriotic sentiment of the Filipinos in less than 100 years. But the cost will be tremendous. General Chaffee speaks from the military point of view, and he bases his opinion on existing conditions. Doubtless, with such an effort and such a sacrifice as the American people put forth to save the union thirty-five years ago, we may be able to subjugate the Filipinos. But is it worth the cost? And is it not an infamous thing to do, anyway?—Boston Post.

No Complaint.

When Major Phipps was in the thick of the glory that marked his picturesque administration of the affairs of the Blockley almshouse, he never lost an opportunity to pose as a model superintendent when visitors were about. There were special corridors for them to investigate, and special attentions that sent them away thankful that the country took such good care of its insane poor. One lady whose interest in charitable work was uncommon called there, and was given much attention by the various underlings. She turned to a man looking interestedly on, and asked:

"Do you like it here?"

"Yes, madam," he replied.

"They treat you well?"

"Yes—very.'

"And you get good food?"

"Very good," he answered.

When she passed on, her amazed guide told her she had been talking to Major Phipps himself. She was mortified at her mistake, and, to show how much she desired to atone, rushed back to the superintendent and said:

"I am very sorry, Major Phipps—very sorry, indeed. Never again, I promise you, will I be governed by appearances!"

The Dairyman's Handbook.

The National Dairy Union, 154 Lake street, Chicago, has published a book entitled the Creamery Patron's Handbook, it being a book of information for the keepers of dairy cows. It contains discussions of the subject by Hon. W. D. Hoard, president of the Dairy Union, together with articles by H. B. Gurler and Charles Y. Knight, officers of the Dairy Union, and reports from the various states, milk tests, butter tests, information in regard to care and feed of cows; photographs of famous cows, etc. It will prove a valuable addition to the library of any farmer and will be indispensible to the dairyman. It ought to have a very large sale.

The Commoner is called upon to chronicle the death of Elder William Walker who died in his 96th year. He was a man of deep conviction. He described himself as a free silver populist, and was an earnest supporter of the democratic ticket in '96 and 1900.

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